

WHEATON PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL VOTE

Chair Weller called the February 9, 2021 Wheaton Planning and Zoning Board meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. Upon roll call, the following were:

Roll Call Vote

Present: Nicole Aranas  
Christopher Dabovich  
Bob Gudmundson  
Cecilia Horejs  
Mark Plunkett  
Dan Wanzung  
Scott Weller

Absent: None

City Staff Present: Tracy Jones, Staff Planner

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - JANUARY 26, 2021

The minutes were approved as presented.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was none.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

ZA #21-02/ SPECIAL USE PERMIT/ 210 W. WESLEY STREET/ BOSWELL

Pursuant to notice duly published on January 18, 2021 and letters mailed to neighboring property owners on January 15, 2021, Chair Weller called to order the February 9, 2021 public hearing requesting a special use permit to allow a business and professional office (State Farm office) to occupy the main floor of the existing commercial space located at 210 W. Wesley Street. The property is zoned C-2 Retail Core Business District.

Chair Weller incorporated an email of general support from Beth and Paul Reis at 111 N. Wheaton Avenue #303, Wheaton into the record at the public hearing.

Caitlin Paloian, 127 Aurora Avenue, Naperville was sworn in. Ms. Paloian stated that she was the attorney representing the petitioner. She stated that the subject commercial space is located on the south side of Wesley Street between the public alley serving the Wheaton Place Parking Garage on the west and Hale Street on the east. The proposed tenant space is part of a multi-tenant commercial building with a suite of salon spaces located in the center of the building. The proposed commercial space is currently vacant but was previously occupied by Jeans and a Cute Top Shop, a women's clothing store, which relocated to 123 W. Wesley Street in 2020.

Ms. Paloian stated that the petitioner is seeking a special use permit to allow a State Farm office to occupy the main floor of the existing commercial space located at 210 W. Wesley Street. This would be the petitioners second State Farm office. The anticipated hours of operation for the insurance agency are Monday through

Thursday from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm; Friday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm; and Saturday from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. The request is proposing only cosmetic changes to the interior of the space, however new burgundy colored awnings are proposed on the exterior. A preliminary floor plan and exterior elevations are attached for reference.

Ms. Paloian addressed the special use factors as required by the Zoning Ordinance. She stated that the proposed special use would not be detrimental to the public health, safety, morals, comfort, convenience, or general welfare of the neighboring property owners. She added that the subject commercial space is located on the end of the multi-tenant commercial building next to the alley serving the Wheaton Place Parking Garage and would not be located between two retail commercial businesses.

Staff Planner Jones stated that the Downtown Wheaton Association (DWA) is in receipt of this special use request, but they have not reviewed the request to date. The next regular meeting of the DWA Board is on Wednesday, February 10, 2021. The DWA Board is expected to review the special use request at that meeting and then make a recommendation to the City.

While the proposed State Farm office would most likely not be harmful to the adjacent uses, the Board questioned how beneficial it would be for the existing retail businesses in the area and the Central Business District (CBD) as a whole. While figures have not been provided, the Board anticipated that both the number of employees and the amount of foot traffic from clients to and from the insurance agency would be minimal.

Mark Boswell, 3872 Woods End Road, Long Grove was sworn in. Mr. Boswell stated that he was the petitioner with State Farm. He stated that he anticipates having five employees at this location. In addition, he expects on average to have 15 client groups in the office per day to start. Then he is hopeful to grow this number to 20-25 client groups in the office per day once the business is established.

Due to the ongoing pandemic, the Board acknowledged that there are some vacant commercial spaces in the CBD. While having vacant commercial spaces in the CBD is not ideal, the Board questioned whether allowing this main floor office use would make the existing situation worse in the long-term.

Mr. Gudmundson added that the Mion Soap and Wyckwood House businesses have recently opened near the subject commercial space and that they both seem to be doing well.

Ms. Horejs questioned whether this would be the petitioner's primary office.

Mr. Boswell stated that he would spend a significant amount of time at this location, especially in the beginning, but the Cicero location would remain his primary office.

There are several vacant commercial spaces, which are comparable to the subject property, in the nearby C-4 District. There is also an abundance of vacant office spaces on Roosevelt Road in the O-R District. Both these zoning districts would allow a business and professional on the main floor as a permitted use. The Board questioned why a location in one of these zoning districts would not work.

Mr. Boswell stated that he fell in the love with the subject commercial space when he first saw it and he has already signed a lease. He especially loves the amount of foot traffic that goes by the commercial space and he did not find something comparable in the C-4 District.

Ms. Paloian acknowledged that her client acted too hastily by signing the lease before obtaining zoning approval.

Don Mahoney, 12S640 Hill Road, Lemont was sworn in. Mr. Mahoney stated that he was also employed by State Farm and he had asked Mr. Boswell to open the second office in Wheaton. He stated that they have two existing agents retiring in the Wheaton area and they want his new office to be close to those locations. He added that Roosevelt Road was too far away.

Ms. Paloian questioned how an office use was permitted on the main floor of 200 W. Front Street (existing RJN Office), which is also located in the C-2 Retail Core Business District.

Staff Planner Jones stated that she would research the history of this property and have it available at the next meeting.

Mr. Gudmundson moved and then Mr. Wanzung seconded the motion to continue the public hearing until February 23, 2021 to give the Downtown Wheaton Association time to submit their recommendation to the City and staff time to provide the history of the property located at 201 W. Front Street. On a voice vote, all voted aye.

V. MISCELLANEOUS

There was none.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The Board adjourned the meeting at 7:52 p.m. On a voice vote, all voted aye.

Respectfully submitted,  
Tracy L. Jones, Staff Planner